

image

IMAGE UNITED

3

OF SIX

\$3.99

VARIANT
COVER





IMAGE UNITED

CHAPTER THREE

Art:

**ERIK LARSEN
ROB LIEFELD
TODD McFARLANE
WHILCE PORTACIO
MARC SILVESTRI
JIM VALENTINO**

Story:

ROBERT KIRKMAN

Layouts:

ERIK LARSEN

Colors:

**NIKOS KOUTSIS
THOMAS MASON
FCO PLASCENCIA
MATT YACKEY**

Cover Colors:

NIKOS KOUTSIS

Lettering:

TOM ORZECOWSKI

Variant Cover:

DALE KEOWN




IMAGE COMICS, INC.

Robert Kirkman - chief operating officer
Erik Larsen - chief financial officer
Todd McFarlane - president
Marc Silvestri - chief executive officer
Jim Valentino - vice president
Eric Stephenson - publisher
Todd Martin - sales & licensing coordinator
Betsy Sorensen - p.r. & marketing coordinator
Brennan Sigel - accounts manager
Sarah Delaine - administrative assistant
Tyler Skyles - production manager
Drew Gill - art director
Jonathan Eblen - production artist
Melissa Howard - production artist
Vivian Kulkarni - production artist
Kwesi Yaw - production artist
www.imagecomics.com

IMAGE UNITED #3 (of 4), August 2010. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2134 Alston Way, 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704. Copyright © 2010 Image Comics. All rights reserved. IMAGE UNITED™ (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of their respective creators, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks and copyrights of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental.
Printed by World Color Press, Inc., Montreal, QC, Canada. 8/4/2010
International Rights Representative: Christine Meyer (christine@gfleystudio.com)





WE DO NOT WIN THIS FIGHT.
THAT MUCH I AM CERTAIN OF.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THIS COULD
HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, BUT THAT TIME IS
LONG PASTED. HE'S HAD TOO MUCH
TIME TO PLAN--TO ORGANIZE.

OUR CAUSE IS ALL BUT LOST.
HIS TAKE-OVER IS INEVITABLE.

AT FIRST THE MASSES
WILL WORSHIP HIM AS
A GOD. HE WILL BRING
ORDER TO A WORLD
OF CHAOS. HE WILL
PROTECT THEM IN WAYS
WE CAN'T, PROVIDE
THEM WITH THINGS WE
DON'T. HIS RULE WILL
BE WELCOME.

THEY WILL BE RULED BY FEAR
OF THE VOID, OF THE UNKNOWN.
THEY WILL LOOK TO HIM FOR
COMFORT, STABILITY AND THEY
WILL GROW COMPLACENT. BUT
HIS REIGN WILL EVENTUALLY BE
SEEN FOR WHAT IT IS.

THE PEOPLE OF THE
WORLD WILL REVOLT.
THE NATIONS OF THE
WORLD WILL RISE UP
AND MAKE WAR
AGAINST HIM--BUT IT
WILL BE TOO LATE.

HIS GRIP ON
THIS WORLD
WILL HAVE
GROWN TOO
TIGHT.

OUR WORLD WILL
BE LAID WASTE AS
A RESULT OF THE
COMING BATTLE. WE
WILL BE LEFT WITH
NOTHING. ALL WILL BE
TAKEN FROM US AND
MADE TO SERVE HIS
NEEDS...HIS WILL.

THIS WILL REDUCE
OUR WORLD TO
CINDER. TRANS-
FORM IT INTO A
DEN OF MISERY
AND PAIN UNLIKE
THE UNIVERSE
HAS EVER SEEN.

IT WILL BE
HELL ON
EARTH AND
IT WILL BE
OUR FAULT.

BECAUSE WE
ALLOWED IT
TO HAPPEN.









IT'S LIKELY THIS IS JUST ANOTHER DIVERSION--MEANT TO OCCUPY US AND WEAKEN US.

I'M SORRY IF I'M NOT MORE HELP-- I'M STILL EXTREMELY NEW TO THIS!

WROKK!



UNGH!

KRAK!



DRAGON'S DOWN!

GIVE HIM A MINUTE-- HE'LL BE OKAY.

WRAMM!



REALLY, GUYS-- I'M FLATTERED BY ALL THIS ATTENTION.

SERIOUSLY.

BRAKKA BRAKKA



OH, YEAH-- GANG'S ALL HERE!

PAIR UP AND START PICKING GUYS OFF, BADROCK!

WE'RE GRAVELY OUT-NUMBERED HERE! WE NEED MORE PEOPLE!



I KNOW I'M STILL
THE NEW GUY--BUT
MAYBE THAT'S THE
CLUE--MAYBE THEY'RE
ALL BEING
CONTROLLED BY
SOMEONE ELSE.

YOU GUYS
DON'T EVEN
KNOW EACH
OTHER!

YOU THINK WE DON'T
KEEP TRACK OF YOU GUYS?
YOU'RE ALL KNOWN FELONS--
MURDERERS. WE TRACK YOU.
WE KNOW WHO YOU'RE
MEETING WITH--HOW YOU'RE
STIRRING UP TROUBLE.

THIS
MAKES NO
SENSE!

NOT ALL
OF--!

ACK!

FINOOSH!

KRAK!

POW!



OH, NEVER
MIND—YOU
GUYS
COULD
MAKE
IT!

HAPPY TO
BE OF
SERVICE.

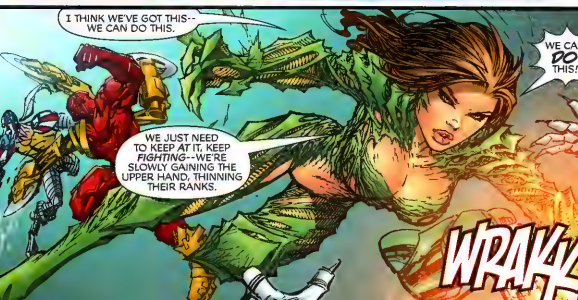
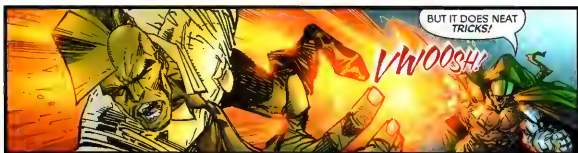
WOULDN'T
WANT YOU
YOUNGBOOD
GUYS TO GET ALL
THE GLORY WHEN
WE PUT AN END TO
ALL THIS.

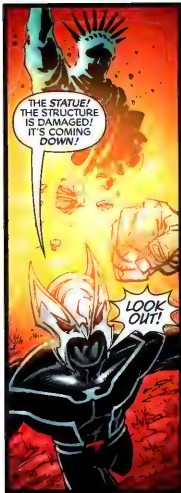
WE CAME
AS SOON AS
WE HEARD—
VELOCITY HAS
ACTUALLY BEEN
HERE A WHILE—
SHE CAME
AHEAD.

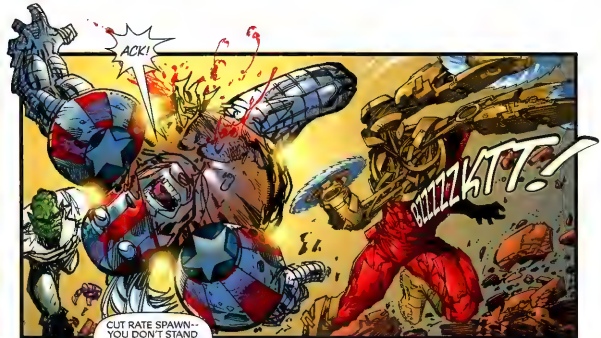
THEY DIDN'T
EVEN NOTICE I
WAS HERE—BUT
THAT'S FINE, I'M
BUSY KICKING
BUTT!

BUDDY,
I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE
SUPPOSED TO BE.

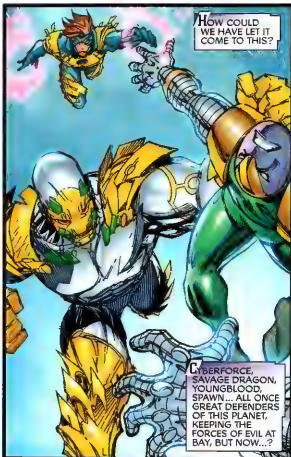
DIDN'T PICK
THIS ONE—IT'S
JUST THE ONE I
ENDED UP WITH.
I'M NOT TOO
FOND OF IT.







MY VISION, OUR FINAL STAND AGAINST THE OMEGA SPAWN--AS WE FALL ONE BY ONE WE INCH CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THAT FUTILE CHARGE...



How could we have let it come to this?

CYBERFORCE, SAVAGE DRAGON, YOUNGBLOOD, SPAWN... ALL ONCE GREAT DEFENDERS OF THIS PLANET, KEEPING THE FORCES OF EVIL AT BAY, BUT NOW...?



I WATCH THEM STRUGGLE, I SEE THEM UNABLE TO DEFEND EVEN THEMSELVES FROM THIS ONSLAUGHT. HOW COULD IT COME TO THIS?



How could they allow their enemies to grow this strong, this organized? They face a unified front they were unprepared for.



And me? What can I do but perish along with them? I haven't the strength to save them all--I've seen this coming, but I wasn't able to prepare them, they wouldn't listen--I was too distracted.

Now I fear all--

--IS LOST.

HWRRKK!

KNOW THAT I AM
HERE, I STAND WITH
THEM--AND AS
LONG AS I STAND
SHOULDER-TO-
SHOULDER WITH
THESE HEROES
THEY ARE MADE
STRONGER.

I GLADLY GIVE
WHAT'S LEFT OF
MY STRENGTH
TO THEM!

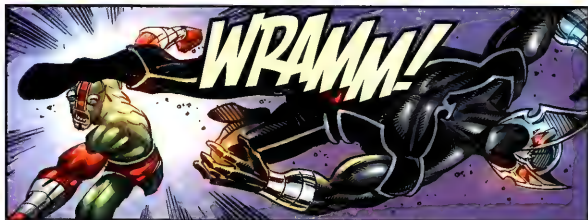
NO, THE FALLEN CAN'T HAVE
DIED IN VAIN. I WILL NOT
ALLOW THEIR SACRIFICE TO BE
FORGOTTEN. UNTIL MY DYING
BREATH I WILL CONTINUE TO
FIGHT, AND WITH IT I WILL UTTER
TRIBUTE TO THEIR SACRIFICE.

THUD!

UNTIL
THE
BITTER
END.

THE END

THE--





A full-page comic book illustration of Omega Spawn. The character is a dark, muscular demon with a large, horned head, glowing red eyes, and a wide, toothy grin. He wears a black, tattered suit with a long, flowing red cape. He is standing in a dark, rocky environment, with chains visible around his waist and legs. The background is a mix of dark red and black, with some greenish-yellow light emanating from the ground.

BOW TO
**OMEGA
SPAWN,**
YOUR NEW
LORD AND
MASTER!

THIS
WORLD--

--IS
MINE!



IMAGE UNITED ORIGINS

PART THREE

Todd McFarlane once penciled and inked a total of 130 pages in a single month.

He was working on two series at the time: *The Amazing Spider-Man* for Marvel (which was bi-weekly at the time) and the *Invasion* miniseries for DC. Nowadays, some artists don't draw 130 pages a year, but back then Todd was holding down a monthly, plus side projects. Miniseries, covers for various titles... He was a juggernaut, determined to succeed at all costs.

Let's back track a bit.

I stopped reading comics when in high school. I was living in West Germany then – it was the mid-Eighties, well before the Berlin Wall came down – and one day, when I realized that every comic book I bought meant I had less money to spend on records, clothes and socializing, I decided to go cold turkey. I didn't even wait for the various storylines I was following to conclude. I just stopped buying comics, sold my entire collection (which was sizeable) and didn't look back.

About four years later, I found myself curiously browsing a spinner rack at a local newsstand and before I knew it, I was hooked again. I was living in California by then and I was going to college, but despite having relatively little free time, comics became an increasingly larger part of my life. I sought out and visited as many comics shops as I could find, replacing the books I'd sold, catching up on what I'd missed in all my favorite titles and constantly trying whatever new series looked interesting.

And no matter where I went, everybody was talking about Todd McFarlane.

Todd had started drawing *The Amazing Spider-Man* for Marvel in 1988, but I'd missed most of that. He was just finishing a two-or-so-year run on the book by the time I rediscovered comics, and I think the first issue I saw on the stands had the Hulk on the cover: Spider-Man was beating the hell out of the Hulk, shattering the book's trade dress in the process. As it turned out, that was Todd's swan song. I looked for back issues, but they were all well over cover price: Todd McFarlane was comics' hottest commodity.

Not long after first encountering Todd's work on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, I learned he was launching a new title – *Spider-Man* – that he would write and draw himself. I waited in line to get a copy of the first issue the night it was released, something I hadn't done before and definitely haven't done since. There were stories about fan anticipation on the local news, there were newspaper articles – friends of mine who weren't even interested in comics asked if I was buying “the McFarlane *Spider-Man* comic.” It was a genuine event.

Spider-Man #1 went on to sell over two million copies.

I didn't know it at the time, but that event was a precursor for Image. After 15 issues of *Spider-Man*, Todd quit the book and following a short break from comics, he joined forces with Erik Larsen, Rob Liefeld and Jim Valentino to form Image Comics. They recruited Jim Lee, Marc Silvestri and Whilce Portacio and less than a year after Todd's final Marvel comic hit the racks, *Spawn* made its debut at numbers nearly matching those of *Spider-Man* #1.

Todd more or less conquered the world after that. *Spawn* was Image's bestselling title, there was a crossover with *Batman*, McFarlane Toys began making some of the most detailed action figures



IMAGE UNITED ORIGINS

ever created, there was a *Spawn* film, a video game, an animated series on HBO, music videos for Pearl Jam and Korn, album covers, you name it. It was incredible to watch, not just because Todd was so successful, but because he remained so committed to everything he did. Some might say he had "the magic touch," but looking at it from the inside (I was working for Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios while much of this was happening), there was nothing magic about it: Todd worked tirelessly – relentlessly – for everything he had.

That, and he always thought ahead.

There was a lot of headshaking when Todd spent three million dollars on Mark McGwire's record-breaking 70th homerun ball in 1998. Even now, some describe it as an act of lunacy, noting that McGwire's record was fast broken by Barry Bonds and that Todd was foolish to invest so much money in something that quickly became, in their estimation, "worthless."

"Foolish" isn't a word I'd ever use to describe Todd McFarlane, though, and anyone paying attention would have realized what Todd did was actually quite clever.

Sure, he spent a lot of money on baseballs (he bought eight balls total – three hit by Sammy Sosa and five by McGwire), but what he got in return far exceeded the amount he paid. Because following the purchase of those balls, Todd was exhibiting at sports events, his toy company was making toys licensed from the MLB, the NFL, NBA and the NHL and he was commissioned to design a new logo for the Edmonton Oilers. The only thing insane about his decision to buy those balls was the amount of exposure he gained – for a *fraction* of the money a PR firm would have charged to reach half as many people.

Jump to 2008: Todd triumphantly returned to *Spawn* with fellow Image founder Whilce Portacio. Together, Todd and Whilce crafted some of the series' best stories, all whilst continuing to oversee McFarlane Toys, developing a new *Spawn* animated series, laying the ground for a second film and starting a video game company with Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling. At the same time, he was busy developing *Haunt* with fellow Image partner Robert Kirkman, which has since gone on to become Image's most successful new series in nearly a decade.

Oh, yeah – and he's also contributing to this book, *Image United*. Given how incredibly busy Todd is, he easily could have shot this whole project down when Erik Larsen first approached him about it last year, but he didn't hesitate to say yes. As anyone involved with this project can tell you, it's a unique process. Pages are going to any one of half a dozen artists at all times and yet somehow, in the midst of it all, Todd still takes time to add little extra touches to whichever pages he has on his drawing table.

We've all been thoroughly astounded by how he's handled his responsibility as part of the *Image United* team. The same drive and commitment that guided Todd through a staggering 130 pages in one month some 20 years earlier is still there.

He's just as determined as ever, still a juggernaut: still Todd.

Eric Stephenson
Publisher

DART TRIUMPHANT



JUST
KEEP
MOVING.

WITHOUT
THAT FANCY
GOD SWORD
YOU'RE NOT
SO TOUGH,
ARE YOU?

WE'VE
GOT THAT
ALL LOCKED
AWAY FOR
YOU.

ALISON
SUMMERS HAD
NEVER BEEN
ARRESTED
BEFORE.

SHE'D NEVER
BEEN BOOKED.

SHE'D NEVER BEEN
INCARCERATED.

By
ERIK LARSEN
WITH
BILL SIENKIEWICZ
EMBELLISHER
TOM ORZECOWSKI
LETTERER
STEVE OLIFF
COLORIST

AND SHE DOESN'T
INTEND TO START NOW.

WATCH
WHERE
YOU'RE--

HEY!

THRAKK!!

KRAKK!!

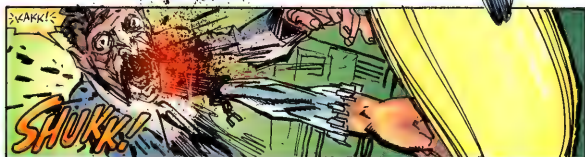
UNNGH!

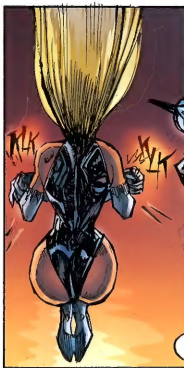
HERE
WE GO.

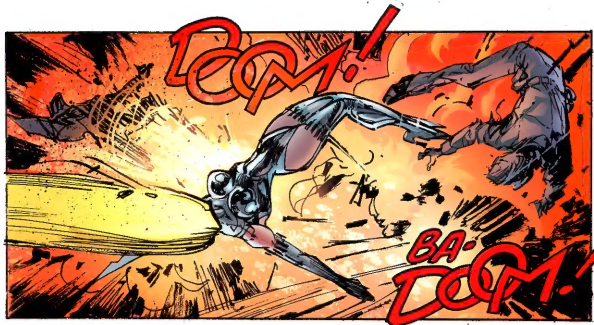
GNHH!


CHOKK!!

HRRR
KKK!!







A full-page comic book illustration of Alison Summers, also known as Storm, in flight. She is depicted from the waist up, wearing her iconic red and silver X-Men uniform. Her blonde hair is flowing behind her, and she has a determined expression. She is holding a long, silver sword in her right hand, which is extended downwards. Her left arm is outstretched forward. The background shows a cityscape at dusk or dawn, with buildings and a bright yellow sun or moon on the left. The sky is a mix of blue and green, with some dark, swirling clouds. The overall style is dynamic and action-oriented.

ALISON SUMMERS
HAD LEARNED
FROM THE BEST.

SHE KNEW WHAT
SHE WANTED.

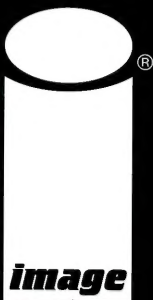
SHE KNEW
WHERE
AND HOW
TO GET IT.

AND NOW
SHE'S FREE.

FREE TO DO
WHAT SHE WANTS.

FREE TO DO
WHAT SHE WILL.

FREE TO
BLAZE HER
OWN PATH.



IMAGECOMICS.COM

